



# *APD NEWS*

Public Information Office: (512) 974-5017

715 E. 8<sup>th</sup> St. Austin, Texas 78701

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Public Information Office, 974-5017

### **City of Austin helps community improve quality of life by closing hotel**

The City of Austin's Police Department Nuisance Abatement Unit, Solid Waste Services' Code Enforcement Division, City of Austin Law Department's Affirmative Litigation Division, and Travis County District Attorney's Office are working together to provide relief to the community from an Austin hotel long known for repeatedly attracting drug and prostitution activity.

The City filed suit on Dec. 1, 2008, against the Budget Lodge Hotel, located in the 9200 block of IH-35. This suit asks the Court to declare the hotel a public nuisance and seeks to immediately end its operations in an effort to protect the surrounding community from the devastating impact of the activities being conducted at the hotel.

"I am pleased that our newly formed Affirmative Litigation Division is working closely with the District Attorney's Office on this important case," said City Attorney David Smith.

From Jan. 1, 2007, through Oct. 1, 2008, APD responded to 463 emergency and non-emergency incidents at the Budget Lodge Hotel. More than 100 of those incidents involved illegal narcotics possession (both sold and used), prostitution, aggravated sexual assault of a child, indecency with a child by contact and aggravated robbery with a deadly weapon. Hotel employees committed a number of the crimes in question. The others were committed by hotel visitors and residents.

"I am proud of our Nuisance Abatement Unit for their diligence and commitment to this community, and the ongoing work to ensure a good quality of life for all," said Police Chief Art Acevedo. "Every officer in our department shares a commitment to assure safety in all parts of our city,"

In addition to the repeated criminal activity at this hotel, inspectors with the City's Code Enforcement Division have issued numerous citations for violations of City Code at the property. This fall, the City's Building and Standards Commission



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declared the hotel to be a public nuisance and found that it was in violation of building codes with dangerous and substandard conditions, some of which remain uncorrected to date. As a result, the City suspended the hotel's operating license on Oct. 28, 2008. Operation of a hotel without a valid operating license is a violation of City Code.

"The Community can only benefit from collaborative efforts such as these that ultimately result in safer neighborhoods," said District Attorney Ronald Earle.

The primary mission of APD's Nuisance Abatement Unit is the abatement of habitual criminal nuisance activity on public or private property. The Nuisance Abatement Unit receives referrals to problem locations from other officers as well as from individual citizens and neighborhood associations. The Nuisance Abatement Unit has investigated more than 100 complaints of criminal nuisance activity since the beginning of 2008.

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